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MERYON

AND MERYON'S PARIS:

WITH A

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF THE

ARTIST'S WORK.

BY FREDERICK WEDMORE.

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MERYON.[1]

I.

NOW more than half a century ago, a London physician—suave, immaculate, irreproachable, after his kind—met, followed, and captured a Paris dancing-girl; and the offspring of their loves, such as they were, was the great artist, Méryon. The offspring of their loves being that great artist, with a spirit at once the most original, imaginative, and persistent, a hand at once the most delicate and the strongest, one is curious to know whether the germ of some fine quality of his, in passion or skill, cannot have been inherited—whether the unlicensed connection which gave him birth had at least

[1] Reprinted, by permission, from the *Nineteenth Century* (May, 1878), with a few variations.

some heart in it, or whether it was but the vulgar and shabby intrigue of the green room and the *cabinet particulier.*

The truest, the most trustworthy story we are likely to get, answers that question not quite in the darkest way. Méryon was one of two children, and the other, a girl, was taken to England by her father, the physician, and there, in spite of the disadvantages and difficulties of her birth, there was made for her what the teller of the story describes to me as 'a brilliant marriage.' She took her place in the world. Méryon himself—Charles Méryon, born in 1821—remained with his mother, whom after some years the father seems to have entirely quitted; the cause of it, again I hear, the offensiveness of the children's grandmother. The vulgarity of the old, of the frowsy, of the unattractive, is a vulgarity one cannot endure; and the woman who allowed to Méryon's mother the life she led—nay, who urged her, it is said, to a worse—is not likely to have brightened for the physician the narrow Paris home into which this and that intolerable

relative of the dancer he had lived with would be prone to insinuate herself unbidden and undesired. The physician went his way, taking, as I have said, the daughter with him, and leaving the son to the mother, and making her some not inconsiderable gift of money, perhaps even for some years a stated and sufficient allowance. At all events, in Méryon's childhood and boyhood the means of living did not seem to be lacking. He was destined for the navy, and entered it at the right moment, leaving it to be an artist when still a young man and a lieutenant. Méryon had owed to his father some material provision for his life. To his mother—the sensitiveness, fineness, and passion of whose nature he believed he had inherited—he owed the hourly cares and thoughts for him that were much of her existence. Her life went out in obscurity—under the cloud of illicit ways, in the fettered freedom of a *demi-monde*—when he was a youth ; and perhaps the most impulsive and resolute, imaginative and nervous, of all the youth of Paris was left surrounded at the best,

as regards kindred, by a vulgar entourage of *pochard* and *canaille*, in a strange loneliness.

His nature had the combined gentleness and fire of a man of genius; the fire ready to flare out when work was to be done or opposition to be encountered; the gentleness to be bestowed in the rare moments of sympathetic friendship. The people who knew him in his later time, artists, critics, kind-hearted connoisseurs, fellow-workers, companions, say that he had the charm of genius. He was pleasant to be with. His obstinacy, however, was from the first as indomitable as his activity at the last was nervous and unhealthy. In the Peninsula of Banks, New Zealand, during his long voyage round the world, he and his comrades were forbidden to make use of the captain's little boat, and their pride was touched by the restraint. Méryon himself would make a boat, he said. A tree was hewn for the purpose, a tent set up for Méryon near the shore, but within range of wild beasts. There for three months young Méryon worked, his food brought to him by his fellows, his hands

raw with the persistency of his labour. The boat once launched, the captain was moved to admiration. It should be set up at home, he declared, in the naval arsenal of Toulon. Somewhere or other there it must now be.

The artistic instinct of Méryon made naval life distasteful. Abandoning the navy, and finding that there were substantial obstacles to his becoming a painter, he determined to be an engraver, and entering after a while the *atelier* of M. Bléry, he left it in 1850, at the age of twenty-nine, to take humble chambers in the Rue St. Etienne du Mont, and to live if possible by the steady pursuit of his art. Those were the days of the beginning of our modern practice of the art of etching. Bracquemond, Flameng, Jacquemart were young. The two first, at least, lived somewhat in the society of Méryon. Bracquemond etched two portraits of him; in one he is sitting in a chair, in the other he is as a face carved in bas-relief in marble. 'Messire Bracquemond,' wrote Méryon, in the quaint verses he even then affected, and which sub-

sequently he was wont to set under certain of his prints:

"Messire Bracquemond
A peint en cette image
Le sombre Méryon
Au grotesque visage."

A French critic, M. Burty, availing himself of the publicity of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, in 1863, gave a catalogue of Méryon's work, which for practical purposes was for the time sufficient.[1] Some classification was attempted by this chronicler; but it is one broad division that chiefly requires to be made. For it was when Méryon, after years of absence, had returned for the first time a man to the city of his birth, and while he was employed for money's sake in much insignificant and mechanical labour of copying, which even an original engraver, until great fame has reached him, can hardly escape —it was at this time, and in the midst of work which served only its purpose of the hour and day, that Méryon had that vision of Paris, the

[1] I am indebted to conversation with M. Burty for more than one of the particulars contained in this notice.

ultimate realization of which, with passion and with patience, lifted him into the rank of the greatest artists that can be.

Méryon's work, then, may be broadly divided into two classes: first, the work done mainly in his earliest time, after drawings of many subjects by old French and other artists—Renier Zeeman, the Dutchman, was one of them;—and second, the sometimes partly original, but oftener *wholly* original work, in which best of all he recorded the characteristics of the Paris of his own day, and yet of the Middle Age, which were passing away under the improving hands of the Second Empire in its first years. There are also the New Zealand views, drawn if not etched very early, and the insignificant or bizarre fancies of his latter days, when his mind declined; but the work of artistic interest is that in which he recorded Old Paris, and he did this well in the etchings which were copies of old drawings which his art and feeling had made into finer pictures, and supremely well in the etchings which were wholly original.

Fancy him, then, established in a lonely way, and yet of course with some artistic comrades within reach, in the cabin-like rooms of the humblest floor of the street, the north side of which is occupied by the church that gives that street its name—St. Etienne du Mont—and which Méryon made the subject of one of the most harmonious and mysterious of his works. I went one evening in the spring of '77 to see the church and street: the street itself will have historic interest as that from which so many of Méryon's finest etchings are dated; but I went chiefly to see, in a way in which hardly any other of the subjects of his pictures would allow one to see, how much or little of voluntary artistic composition entered into his work of record. Not much here, as far as concerns the mere lines of his plate, though the light and shade on the St. Etienne were his own. The Gothic college to the left had disappeared—was threatening no doubt to disappear when he executed his print. But the church itself which remained—of that his record had been abso-

lutely and delicately faithful, both the building and its position, half behind the massive angle of the Panthéon. The humble rooms he lived in, on that side of the church not seen in the picture, must have looked upon the church's bare south wall. The quarter, in any journey from reputable parts of Paris, would be reached by passage from richer street to poorer, and so to poorer again. A lost quarter, even behind and beyond the shabbiest of the quarters of students; around it, in strange lanes, the dwellings of the *chiffonniers*, the rag-gatherers, who with basket on back cluster towards it at midnight from nightly search among offal and gutter, and wander out from it once more when evening has come again, to spread themselves over the town. Beyond it an undiscovered country, known only to the police and to the workers in strange trades plied in remote places. There Méryon lived.

That old-world quarter of Paris—a lost quarter, a quarter seemingly deserted, yet thickly peopled all the while—was favourable

to Méryon's art, to the growth of his imagination, to the strength and endurance of the impression which the mysterious and crowded city made on him in these the first years of his living there in manhood. He began his study of Paris, observing consciously the quaint combinations of window and house-roof, the chimneys, the *tourelles* in quiet back streets, narrow blind lanes where the Middle Age lingered, and perhaps not less consciously taking note of that moral aspect of Paris which was to colour his work and to bring into strange and new juxtaposition elements of beauty and horror the fascination of whose union he was almost the first to appreciate. A high literary genius, Victor Hugo, had blended beauty and horror in his great romance, *Notre Dame de Paris*, which Paris had inspired. But in pictorial art Méryon was to be alone, and the Paris that he pictured was pictured in a way only too much his own—only too much above and beyond the valuing of those to whom he first submitted his work.

I went last year into the shop of a little-

known dealer, and asked for Méryon's etchings. 'Views of Paris?' he answered, and knew what I meant; but knew no better than did the print-sellers of the artist's own lifetime how entirely these things were pictures, how much they were visions. Well, with little encouragement, Méryon did his work—none the less priceless as a record because it bore on it too the mark of his own sentiment—did the etching of St. Etienne, of the Tour de l'Horloge, of the Cathedral of Notre Dame seen from behind and from over the water, from places now strangely changed; did the etching of the thick and speechless uncommunicative walls of the *Rue des Mauvais Garçons* (Baudelaire's favourite), and 'The Doric little Morgue,' the quay alive with the bustle and excitement of an instant of horrible arrival. He did these things, and took them to the dealers. One refused, and another. Wrapping up his portfolio he went on again—tramped, lonely and unencouraged, round the Paris he was beginning to hate.

Disappointment and neglect told soon upon

the delicate organization of the artist. Whimsical he had always been; exaggerated in his hates and loves and in the very efforts of his will; and now some years of poverty and isolation—some years of the production, amidst complete indifference, of immense and immortal work—began to thrust into prominence those traits in his character which could not be noticed without suspicion and fear. He fell violently in love with some little girl of the humble and uneducated class—a *fillette de crémerie*, a bright young woman, who stood, I suppose, behind the counter of the shop at which he got his morning meal. The charm of the man in his pleasant hours, his genius, his spirit, the prodigious skill of his hand, were less apparent to the Parisian shop-girl than the surprises of his wayward temper, his exaltation, his not unfrequent gloom. It was no use, his passion and beseeching—*elle ne voulait pas de lui.* She stood aloof, and he at last went on his way, embittered and saddened. The hardness of his living, the neglect of his art, the deprivation even of personal pleasure, of

the excitement of love—these things curdled in his brain, and hallucinations crowded round him.

He had one constant and most kind patron and encourager—Monsieur Niel, librarian at the Ministry of the Interior, who had tried, and not always without success, to get him commissions, and who was forming even then by purchase, when the prints had no recognized value, what was destined to be the earliest of the great collections of Méryon's work. Meeting this gentleman one day, Méryon looked aside with a frown and an expression of injury and grievance. He would have nothing to say to M. Niel. '*Voyons*,' said M. Niel; 'what is it then, Méryon?' 'You rob me,' was the answer, 'and make a profit by my work.' Another day, a critic, who among the earliest had recognized the genius of Méryon to create and interpret—to throw his spirit and the very spirit of Paris into his record of the semblance of its stones—met him in similar mood. 'The money that you owe me,' said Méryon, when he was forced to speak. But

there was no money owed between them at all.

And so the artist, sufficiently neglected indeed from without, came to carry within him his most implacable enemies. In his imagination, they lingered in wait behind the corners of the streets—would be down upon him to distress and thwart him if he paused long or was heedless of who approached. And so with nervous and frightened eye, but with hand still keenly obedient and splendidly controlled, he stood on some empty space of quay, sketching, as his wont had been, with the finest of pencil points, the angles of house and church, bits of window, roof and chimney, to be afterwards pieced carefully together and used in the etching of the plate. The strokes drawn by his pencil were often drawn upwards instead of downwards. Often the sketches were discarded: the point of view had not been the right one. Thus I have seen a drawing of the Pompe Notre-Dame, taken from under a bridge whose arch, as an element in the picture, prominent in the foreground, he

afterwards removed. There is a drawing, too, for the right side of his *Abside de Notre-Dame*, in which the line of varied house-roofs is higher than in the plate. He saw subsequently that the houses must be lower, smaller, and more distant, to give the sense of height and domination and an almost lonely grandeur to the structure of the cathedral that rises dark and solemn against the evening sky.

These things, by which a perfect composition was generally attained, he saw of course during those best days—the years of 1850 to 1854—in which he was doing the masterpieces of his work. Later, the skill of the hand was guided by no keen judgment nor sane imagination; at last the plates, or some of them, in certain of their states, were disfigured by imaging the fancies of a mind rebellious or vanished.

Presently—it was at a time when he had done his finest work, but had not as yet drifted into madness—Méryon removed for a while to Brussels: a commission, obtained at the instance of M. Niel, awaiting him from the Duc d'Arem-

berg. Soon he came back. It was in the beginning of 1858, and he installed himself in the Rue des Fossés-Saint-Jacques. There his illness more completely declared itself. Discouraged, overwhelmed with his failure, he gave up life: the common mechanical activities of life: the trouble of dressing, undressing, eating—down even to these small things, his energy was gone. He could not be roused from his bed. His friends at that time, recognizing that his career was in the past—believing that almost on any day they might hear that he was dead or in the madhouse—brought one night the artist Flameng to his bedside, and Flameng made there a drawing of him, of which a reproduction has since been published. That night, or a day or two afterwards, he became dangerous, and they took him away to Charenton in a cab.

The order, the care, of the great *maison de santé* rapidly influenced him, and after some period of probation, during which he did some copyist's work in his art, he was discharged. In his new lodging of the Rue Duperré he retouched

his coppers. Arrangements were made for the publication of one or two of them in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* and *Fine Arts Quarterly Review;* others, retouched, were printed anew by Delâtre —those especially that had not before been printed by this printer of exceptional and unequalled skill. But no success of a substantial kind came to Méryon's work in Méryon's life. His days were more and more agitated; the sense of failure preyed on him, though it was not to that that he attributed his illness. 'I became mad,' said Méryon, 'the day I was going to sea, when I was a boy and they told me of my birth. The shock of it made me mad.' That was very probably a fancy.

In 1867 he returned to Charenton, there thinking himself no longer Méryon, but some saintly character of some far-off time; and there, next year, obstinately refusing sustenance, because he said there was not food enough in the world, and he was getting more than his share—there, in February, 1868, he died. '*Sa barque,*' as an old comrade of his on the high seas said finely at

his grave—'*sa barque, à tout instant noyée, courait sans repos au naufrage.*'

Long afterwards, one curious and careful to know about his life went to Charenton for particulars—Charenton, outside Paris; the gaunt white house in the bareish land. Did the Doctor remember Méryon? 'Méryon—Méryon? No. Let us see, however.' And he consulted a book. 'Méryon? Oh, yes. Number six hundred and forty-three. See here—a man who at the last was writing incoherent memorials. I will show them you.' And, ringing the bell, 'Send down here the portfolios of No. 643.'

The immense artist—number six hundred and forty-three!

II.

What was the artist's work?

The original work of Méryon was called into being, so to say, by the destruction of Old Paris, which he looked upon not so much with an antiquarian as with an artistic and personal regret. Had Méryon been genuinely antiquarian, he

would have sketched details of architecture with a colder correctness, but with less of living force. As it was, he loved architecture, and knew it more widely than any artist before. The great strength of his draughtsmanship lay indeed in its representation, and all the styles he represented he represented with equal power; but in the under-current of his work there is the mood of passion of an individual mind. Therefore his work combines, and will combine still more in the future (when the actual remembrance of the things it commemorates shall have passed away), a certain antiquarian interest, dear to some, and valuable no doubt to all, with that much higher interest of work of an intense personality—work which no one could do before, and which no one has done since.

Likely enough, no other circumstance than the passing away of that old vesture of the city which he loved would have roused him to the complete expression of himself in art. His earlier work, after good masters, is adroit, but hardly personal. Some skill to speak in his art

had begun to come before the substance to be spoken. Afterwards he failed as a painter: some attempts at painting, during the early Paris years, having proved to him not only the presence of manual and technical difficulties hard to overcome, but a defective vision for colour, so that green was seen by him as red. The defectiveness of vision for colour had its compensation in an absolutely exceptional sensitiveness to tone and gradation. Etching was his art; and in the etching of Paris this mysterious and brooding spirit, whose care was for the past and the familiar—never the new—found his particular work. His sympathetic interest in his every subject, in the place, in the association, in the spirit of the scene, as well as in the lines and lights which he followed with so infinite a subtlety, divides his chronicle of Paris utterly from all others that artists have made of cities—gives it a unity, lacking, say, to that diligent and not unpicturesque record which Wenceslaus Hollar made of the London of the Commonwealth. And so it is that his work has a personal stamp and charm

of his own imagination enriching the bare walls and tottering houses—a charm recalling by that imaginative quality the literary work of Victor Hugo in *Notre Dame de Paris*, and of the great English master in *The Tale of Two Cities* and in *Barnaby Rudge*. And that imaginative, that personal quality, joined to manual dexterity likewise unsurpassed, makes his etched work the greatest and most profoundly personal of any done since Rembrandt's.

Putting aside the drier and less artistic among the copies of other men's work, and a few minor records that were wholly his own—such as the *Ministère de la Marine*, say, and the *Bain Froid Chevrier*—Méryon executed during his four great years, from 1850 to 1854, some dozen and a half, or twenty plates, which in their *ensemble* guarantee his fame. A quite limited number of impressions having been taken in the course of successive years, Méryon himself at last destroyed the plates—ploughed deep burin lines across them, in a moment of despair, as Mr. Hamerton picturesquely informs us. I thank

Heaven he did. For the truth is, if that was madness, there was much method in it. The plates were used up hopelessly; and though no doubt they might have been again retouched, steeled, and so reproduced by the thousand in the poorest of their forms, the artist in destroying them did in the main but protect us from the eventual outpouring, in the interests of the shop, of masses of misleading impressions, libels upon his art. His works are rare—the best of them, in the best states, very rare; but there are enough of them, as there are enough of Rembrandts and of the *Liber* prints of Turner, to be seen by those anxious to see, and not too many to be cherished and held as precious things. Etchings are works of highest art only on the condition that the impressions submitted are of finest quality. The sharpness of the lines, the clearness of the lights, the richness of the transfer from copper to paper —these things, in their proper combination, are only possible while the plate remains flawless. And though impressions from Méryon's plates must now always be rare, the plates were not

destroyed too soon. As it is, the prints differ extremely in quality. Too many bad ones remain for the unwary.

The British Museum and two or three private collections are in possession of examples of his entire work. Isolated pieces, or a few carefully gathered, are to be seen more frequently among the lovers of art. Pieces here and there occur at sales; here and there in the portfolios of dealers. But for the public to be properly acquainted with them as a series, as a whole, as the work of a life, there is needed an exhibition of them in their choicest states and best impressions, and this is an exhibition which even a society such as the Burlington Fine Arts Club would do itself much honour by undertaking.

For, though a single piece may show well enough both manual skill and a sense of beauty which shall be a surprise to the stranger, it is only by a knowledge of the whole, or at all events of several pieces carefully gathered, that the personal sentiment can be known and valued —that it can be felt how much more is in the

artist's thought and work than the mere stones of the building he is recording, the mere water whose steady flow under dark bridges he has painted, so to say, as no one else; how he is possessed of a sense of the restless, eager, almost tragical activity of the existence around him; how the character, the life, the mysteries, the fortunes of Paris—the Paris unfrequented of the tourist and the prosperous—are depicted on his plates.

For what one print suggests, another print confirms. The *Rue des Mauvais Garçons*, with its gaunt house lines, its barred windows, its darkly shadowed portal, and deserted ways—its narrow pavement, along which two lonely figures hurry, and 'gather garments round them, pass, nor pry'—has its companion in the *Morgue*, where, before the tender and delicate lines of the Doric building now destroyed, and before the many-storied houses with windows indifferent or listening, the weird figures of Méryon's pencil gaze idly or rush with terror: here, a cruel crowd assembled heartless, the unmoved witnesses of

the terrible arrival; there one woman in the agony of dread or discovery, knowing or surmising whose is the body borne with dropped and heavy head, with wet limbs, from the river.

These things are conveyed with the strangest and most fascinating and most impressive union —Méryon's alone—of a realistic art that recoils from nothing of terrible, of shabby, of loathsome, provided it be actual, true, and of our day, with an imaginative art—an art of suggestion, almost of fantasy—that speaks to the mind by symbols, by hints of profound significance yet ever varying interpretations—an art in this one sense akin to that of the *Melancholia* and *The Knight of Death.* And above these scenes, so depicted that the realism which at first you looked for over all is arrested and elevated by imagination, or the imagination which at first you wanted over all is disturbed by the healthy shock of realism—above these scenes, these and so many others so depicted, there broods with satisfaction Méryon's *Stryge*—the horned and winged demon, an incarnation of all evil and disastrous things, which

the Gothic imagination set among the carved stones of Notre Dame, and which the genius of Méryon understood and interpreted, as it looked down from its lonely heights upon the life of the city. Here and elsewhere Méryon recorded strange things, terrible things, beautiful things, but never his sense of this or that object—building, church, or bridge—for its own sake alone. He recorded in them his imagination of Paris—his sense of various fortunes and many lives. He did this with the truth of fact, and the truth of poetic fiction.

The imaginative power never, except at will, weakened his grasp of the actualities he wanted to portray. I have spoken already of architecture, of the equal force in seizing and recording the characteristics of styles various or opposed, the solemnity of the Gothic cathedral, the lightness and simplicity of the Morgue, the elaborate luxuriance of the Renaissance waxing weightier to the days of Louis Quatorze—witness the church (St. Etienne itself) in the background of the *St. Etienne du Mont.* But he had not only

the sense of the picturesque and the characteristic; he had the sense of construction. Take the *Pompe*—the engine-house by the river—and its scaffolding, beam crossed by beam. Here his pleasure in constructive work, however humble, is shown by his close and careful following of the woodwork to its darkest and furthest recesses. His fame would be assured if it rested only on the rendering of the labour of men's hands, from the fretted roof of the cathedral and stately towers to the intricate timbers of the engine-house, or the rough boarding quickly placed round spots marked for destruction or repair.[1]

But while specially heedful of the streets and bridges, quays and houses, amid which the weird figures of his drama passed in playing their part,

[1] Mr. Hamerton, generally strong and discriminating in his praise, has blamed Méryon for a 'puerile imitation' of the grain of wood in the *Rue de la Tixéranderie.* But Méryon erred in good company—with Dürer and Lucas of Leyden. (See the St. Jerome of Dürer, and an Entombment of Lucas of Leyden.)

Méryon looked with no careless eyes on all of Nature that was visible in Paris—on water and sky. The *Pont au Change*—both the large original etching and the exquisite interpretation of Nicolle's old design — the *Pont Neuf*, the great *Abside* itself with its foreground of Seine stream, will show us that no one like Méryon has depicted running water, now shallow, now deep, never mirror-like, never gathered into waves, but rippling pleasantly against the angles of the bridge piers, or flowing moody and sullen under its darkest arches; now in happy sunlight; now in profound and blackened shadow, suggestive of the suicidal plunge and the slime of the river-bed; now again in the half lights, the delicate semi-tones more beautiful and difficult. Here, at least, there is success undisputed, and in etched work quite unequalled, save in our own day once and once only by the broad ripple of the Thames in *Agamemnon*, and save, in the great days, by the tranquil waters of Rembrandt, which reflect the pleasant lines of house and tree in *Cottage and Dutch Haybarn*, and of stream-

side, fence, and herbage in *Cottage with white Palings.*

The great etchers have been very chary of their treatment of skies, and Méryon, in adventuring sometimes a little further, could not hope to fare better than they. He would only have copied Rembrandt had he left, for the most part, his skies a blank; the master found that that simple proceeding, if properly combined with a subtle toning of the landscape, best suggested the open sky of open country—the stillness and the spaciousness he loved. Therefore he departed from it scarcely more than twice: once in the rainstorm of the *Three Trees;* once in depicting in a rare small landscape the limited light of dawn.

But Méryon's skies were not the skies of open country; no vast spaces of unbroken air, of light uncrossed by shadows, but mostly fragments of sky seen from between towering street-lines—the grey, obscured, and lower sky of cities; now and again, as in the *Abside*, larger tracts, here charged with brooding clouds, with birds flying low—the 'solemn, admonishing skies' of a mind constant

to its own imaginations. In the *Abside*, with its rolling cloud, his sky is at its best; so it is in the etching of the *Pont au Change vers* 1784 (after Nicolle), and in the clouded air of the *Pont Neuf*. But elsewhere his lines are now and then hard; his dots now and then mechanical in effect, though never without meaning. He saw skies as a poetical artist is bound to see them, but his hand, in rendering them, was not always of equal sureness. The conditions of etching—the employment of pure lines—fettered him, and what if he did fail sometimes, where Claude himself, the artist of the sunset—the triumphant craftsman of the plate, Dumesnil No. 15—failed often!

But indeed his distant skies are often of marvellous poetry, and the atmosphere between us and those furthest skies is of singular fidelity. Méryon felt the air, now keen and clear, now misty; now in the pleasantest places of brilliant Paris, sunny as Van der Heyden's or De Hooch's; now thick and blackish grey, as it hangs sluggishly under damp dark arch or over the slime of the banks of the river.

Lastly, the figures of Méryon. Here, as nowhere else, reality and fantasy were allowed to join. They are small always—little passing masses of light, shade, and movement, to relieve, to indicate, to suggest. They make no claim to accuracy of draughtsmanship. But they are always interesting, fascinating, and alive, always in strange accord with the dominant note of the subject, whether they are found in grace of quietness or energy of action. Thus the tall and tranquil elegance of the standing figure in the *Abside*, almost sculpturesque in the simplicity of its grace, like that of the figure leaning against the doorway in the *Rue de la Tixéranderie*, fits the sentiment no less than it suits the composition, and is Méryon's and no other's. Under the arch of *Le Pont Notre-Dame*, a woman's figure, standing, brooding nobly, is set well against the weird activity of the figure springing downwards by the rope. It is a page out of Eugène Sue and the *Mysteries of Paris*. Under the shadow of the College of Montaigu, now departed, sisters of charity hie on their errand; on the church

steps a beggar will not be denied. Before the Morgue there gather, as we have said already, its eager seekers and its cruel crowd—a dramatic scene, immensely emphasized. Somewhere else, there is a boat on dark water, with strange significant dredging. And below the place where the sunlight Méryon painted so well, strikes on the turrets of the Pont Neuf, figures point with eager gesture to the shadowed and blackened water, and in the boat a group of three form or suggest, like the willows in *Childe Roland*, 'a suicidal throng.' For no ghost would have been needed to beckon Méryon to 'more removèd ground,' for such 'impartment' as it might desire, 'to him alone.' Spirits spoke to him, only too well, in every street of Paris. The stones were alive. And in every building of beauty or age, at every dark street corner, in every bridge that spanned the breadth of Seine, in every aspect of wandering water or passing sky, there was something to recall to him the fortunes of the solitary, of the disappointed, of the desperate, of the poor. His sense of these

strange fortunes—of their mystery and tragedy —he has woven inseparably into the fabric of his work.

FREDERICK WEDMORE.

NOTES FOR THE AMATEUR.

MERYON'S etchings are more difficult to classify than those of any other artist as important. He is not alone among great artists in having done much original work which we could afford to be without, but he is unlike most of his fellows in having produced much that is but the labour of the copyist, and he is unlike most copyists in having given to some of his translations a picturesque quality and artistic value not existing in the designs he was engaged to reproduce.

On these accounts, if we attempted, in a catalogue, to divide his work simply into original work and work more or less of reproduction, we should find a few of his best things in the second class, and many of his worst in the first; and there would be disadvantage and confusion in this, because people give—and generally rightly give—to "original" work an honour which they withhold from that which is confessedly adapted.

The arrangement then—it may be suggested—ought to be chronological. But a complete chronological arrangement it is impossible to make. The data do not exist. Moreover, such arrangement, even could it be accomplished, would result in embedding the artist's very finest work in the midst of his most insignificant. Where, as in the case of Méryon, a line may be drawn pretty sharply between good and bad, it seems important to draw that line—important to give to the good prominence and to give to it relief.

The most natural division then, to those who have studied Méryon sympathetically, comes to be this, to begin with—on the one side, his art work, the work by which he will live along with Rembrandt and Rembrandt's peers; on the other side his commoner work, of which some was original indeed, but without significance, and some the mechanical rendering of things that had no interest for him. To his poverty, as well as sometimes to the whims of his later years, we owe the presence of so much which there is no need to pause over.

I have, in the Catalogue, dealt but briefly with this unimportant work. Nevertheless it is set down there for the curious. In the "states" of

it there is comparatively little variety, for the plates which were not really characteristic of him were not the plates which Méryon loved—he did not linger over them, retouch here, and obliterate there, as with the nobler plates, which evidence his sense of high and tragic beauty, and which record his view of Life as they record Paris. The student who collects for Art's sake is occupied with the finest, with the most characteristic; and on these I have chiefly insisted.

There are often several states of these finer prints; partly because, as public things, they passed naturally through more stages than did the plates for private patrons, and partly because it was a pleasure to Méryon to handle them, even for purposes of the most trivial change. Of these fine prints, the First States, properly so called—I am not speaking of those Trial Proofs which have been called First States erroneously—are often not actually less numerous than the later, but they are more desired. When the impressions of a true First State are actually less numerous it is likely they bear some mark of which the artist speedily disapproved—verses, say, such as those in *Le Pont Neuf* and *Le Stryge*, which touched too closely on the lines of the picture, and so were promptly suppressed.

Trial proofs are habitually rare, and they are often undesirable, unless the particular object be to trace the progress of the artist's labour, rather than to enjoy the fruits of it.

But if true First States of Méryon are frequently not rarer than Second or than Third, it is fine impressions that are rare. In the later States they hardly occur: in the earlier they occur less often than they might have done had the printing been invariably skilful. But it is these, and these alone, that should be sought. It is to discern these that the eye should be gradually educated. The excellence of the impression is everything. Without it the work of art hardly exists. And for the excellence of the impression, priority of State, though it is frequently important, gives no sufficient guarantee.

Méryon lived in the mad-house some time after his prints began to be collected, and it is now eleven years since he was put into his grave. The commercial value of his work has seen some changes. Not long before his death, the whole set of his Paris etchings—not all that recorded Paris, but all that formed the professed series—was to be had for thirty francs. Yet earlier, when he was at large and was but gradu-

ally starving, he thankfully accepted the veriest trifle for a fine impression of his *Abside.* I have seen a bill which he made out to a patron-friend of those days: "To Monsieur Vasset, who has done me the honour to take several of my prints, the *Abside*, a franc and a half." But when he was locked away in Charenton, and could do nothing more with sanity, appreciation began.

M. Niel, an early friend, had the first important collection that was sold under the hammer. Then followed M. Burty's, M. Hirsch's, and later, M. Sensier's. In Paris there remain about three good collections, of which M. de Salicis's is the best. In London—not to speak now of the cabinets of private collectors—the British Museum is rich in the prints of Méryon.

The impressions are printed on paper of many sorts. A greenish tinged paper Méryon liked, and it is one of the favourites of collectors. Its unearthly hue adds to the weirdness of some of the pictures, and sometimes suitably; but it is not always good. A thin old Dutch paper, wiry and strong, white originally, and only toned by age, gives some of the finest impressions. Other good examples are on Japanese, and there are fine ones on thinnest India paper that is of ex-

cellent quality. Modern Whatman and modern French paper have been used for many plates; and a few impressions, which, I think, were rarely printed except by Méryon himself, are found on a paper of yellowish brown, on which the effect is but seldom satisfactory.

As to the classification of States adopted in the Catalogue, I have tried—with the approval, perhaps, of those more skilled amateurs to whom I owe so much—to avoid the purposeless confusion which results from treating as a State that which is but a variation of work still in progress. When the plate is for the first time completed, that is its "First State." And afterwards, each change of State chronicled implies an actual difference, though the presence of such difference may sometimes be most intelligibly indicated, not by elaborate description difficult to follow, but by record of the marginal and other letterings with which Méryon himself expressed the fact of change.

F. W.

London, July, 1879.

CATALOGUE.

THE ART WORK OF MERYON.

(The measurements are taken in every case from plate-mark to plate-mark.)

I.

EAUX FORTES SUR PARIS, *par C. Méryon, MDCCCLII.* Height $6\frac{5}{10}$, width 5. The cover for the Paris set. It bears the title on a representation of a slab of stone, which is doubtless symbolical of the building of Old Paris. And it is here by a happy coincidence at the head of a work in which the artist himself has *built* rather than drawn.

This set Méryon sought to make public together, and it constituted in his mind a work. There are—besides one variation—twenty-two pieces, ten of which were destined as tail-pieces, or as commentaries on the greater plates. Of these some few, as the descriptions easily show, hold their place in the Art Work of Méryon only because they complete his thought, and so are bound to be presented in the order in which he arranged them.

2. A REINIER, DIT ZEEMAN, PEINTRE ET EAU-FORTIER. H. 7 ; w. $2\frac{7}{10}$. The Dedication. Forty-two lines of verse

to the artist—"painter of sailors,"—one of whose plates had helped to inspire Méryon with the love of the architecture of cities. Méryon desires to connect with Zeeman's name the work in which he has "engraved Paris."

There are very few impressions.

3. OLD GATE OF THE PALAIS DE JUSTICE.[1] H. $3\frac{1}{2}$; w. $3\frac{4}{10}$. The Palais faces us, its round towers flanking the gate.

First State. Before all letters.

Second State. With "Paris. C. Méryon f. it. MDCCCLIV. Imp. rue N. S. Etienne-du-Mont, 26."

This plate and the *Tombeau de Molière* were engraved on the same copper, which was then very promptly divided.

4. "QU' AME PURE GÉMISSE." H. $2\frac{8}{10}$; w. $1\frac{4}{10}$. Verses beginning thus, and bewailing the life of Paris.

Some impressions have "rougisse" for "gémisse."

5. ARMS OF PARIS. H. $5\frac{4}{10}$; w. $4\frac{4}{10}$. A symbolical design, in which a galley, full sail, makes for the right.

[1] I have kept the French titles only when they are of Méryon's giving.

There are trial proofs before all letters. The published state has Méryon's name, date, and address.

6. "FLUCTUAT NEC MERGITUR." H. $6\frac{7}{10}$; w. $6\frac{3}{10}$. So called from the inscription upon a band in the design, which is a variation of the first *Arms of Paris*, and has the galley sailing towards the spectator.

In this rare print the oars are lifted: in Mr. Seymour Haden's completed pen drawing they are drooped.

7. LE STRYGE. H. $6\frac{8}{10}$; w. $5\frac{1}{10}$. The horned and winged demon of stone, at an angle on the heights of Notre Dame, surveys, with head on hands, the city: the tower of St. Jacques in middle distance, and the hill rising towards Montmartre.

There are trial proofs, rarely good, with "C. M." on chimney just inside the oval; no letters outside; and the plate a little larger than in the first state.

First State. Plate slightly reduced. There is added "C. Méryon del. sculp," with "MDCCCLIII," reversed, in left corner, and in the right "A. Delatre, imp., Rue de la Boucherie, 6," and the lines

> "Insatiable Vampire, l'éternelle Luxure
> Sur la Grande Cité convoite sa pature."

Very few impressions.

Second State. The plate again very slightly reduced

to the measurements given, and the lines of verse are removed.

The earliest impressions, generally with the edge of the plate dirty, are as fine as in the first state.

Third State. Other letters except the "C. M." inside oval are erased, and "Le Stryge" is added as title.

Fourth State. Just below the oval, in the smallest capitals, is added the printer's new address, "A. Delatre. Imp. R. St. Jacques, 265," and the number "1" is added near the "C. M." inside the oval.[1]

Mr. Stopford Brooke sends me a "brouillon" from M. Jules Andrieu, which I translate. "In the winter of 1861-62," says M. Andrieu, "Madame Max Valrey introduced me to Méryon. Taking up the etching which did not then bear the name of *The Stryge*, Méryon said to me, 'You can't tell why my comrades, who know their work better than I do, fail with the Tower of St. Jacques? It is because the modern square is the principal thing for them, and the Middle Age tower an accident. But if they saw, as I see, an enemy behind each battlement and arms through each loophole; if they expected, as I do, to have the boiling oil and the molten lead poured down on them, they would do far finer things than I can do. For often I have to patch my plate so much that I ought indeed to be a

[1] In this way Méryon numbered in their last regular *tirage*, and always inside the line of the picture, the twelve principal pieces of his set of Paris, of which twelve this is the first.

tinker. My comrades,' added he, striking the *Stryge*, 'my comrades are sensible fellows. They are never haunted by this monster.' 'What monster?' I asked, and seeing a reproachful look, I corrected myself, 'or rather, what does this monster mean?' 'The monster is mine and that of the men who built this Tower of St. Jacques. He means stupidity, cruelty, lust, hypocrisy,—they have all met in that one beast.'"

8. LE PETIT PONT. H. $10\frac{3}{10}$; w. $7\frac{6}{10}$. The view is taken from the towing-path just above the level of the water. The bridge, of three arches, is in front. Tall houses, beginning at the left, recede into the distance, and above them rise the towers of Notre Dame.

First State. Before the "C. M." in the upper right-hand corner.

Second State. With "C. M." in the corner, but before any other letters.

Third State. With a title written: "Le Petit Pont," and "publié par l'artiste" in the left lower corner, and "A. Delatre, Rue St. Jacques, 171," in the right.

Fourth State. With cross lines in the sky, slanting from the right upper corner of it.

Fifth State. With "Le Petit Pont" now in small capitals, and "1850" and the number "2."

The composition is but ill-balanced.

9. L'Arche du Pont Notre Dame. H. 6; w. $7\frac{8}{10}$. The view is taken almost from the water's level, and consists chiefly of the arch of the bridge. A tall woman of graceful figure stands in a boat. A workman is slung in a rope to work at the masonry. Through the arch is seen the woodwork that supported the old Pompe, and a bridge and towers are beyond.

There are rare, but ineffective, trial proofs of pure etching.

First State. With "C. Méryon, del. sculp., Imp. rue N^e St. Etienne du Mont, 26" in the left corner, and "Paris: 1853" in the right.

The plate is well represented only by fine impressions of this state.

Second State. With "C. M." in the upper corner, and with the title; the earlier inscription being removed.

Third State. With the addition "A. Delatre, Imp. St. Jacques, 265," and the number "3."

10. La Galerie de Notre Dame. H. $11\frac{1}{10}$; w. 7. A view from inside the tower, looking through the pointed arches out upon the city. Ravens have lodged inside the arches, and flutter in the air beyond.

First State. In the left corner "C. Méryon del. sculp., 1853," and, in the right, "Imp. Rue N^e St. Etienne-du-Mont, 26."

The only fine impressions are in this state; th

shadows should then be dark, but not impenetrable, and the sun-lighted stones very brilliant.

Second State. With monogram in left upper corner. The words at bottom are erased, and the title "La Galerie N. D." substituted. There are also added, between the two last narrow columns towards the right, five birds, very small.

Third State. With "A. Delatre, R. St. Jacques, 265," in the right corner, and with the number "4."

Such a view is described by Victor Hugo in *Notre Dame de Paris.*

11. LA RUE DES MAUVAIS GARÇONS. H. 5; w. $3\frac{9}{10}$. A Middle Age house, forbidding of aspect, with its big number, 12, over the narrow door and barred windows. Rain-water pipes, protected by great stones, at the level of the street. Two women, seen from behind, pass along the pavement.

First State. Before the verses beginning

"Quel mortel habitait
En ce gîte si sombre?"

Second State. With the verses, and with "Méryon, imp. Rue N^e St. Etienne du Mont" along the side of the plate. Both states are rare.

One of the most significant of sketches, and of mysterious effect. It is vignetted. I hear of a copy by Lawrence.

12. La Tour de l'Horloge. H. $10\frac{2}{10}$; w. $7\frac{3}{10}$. The Seine low in the foreground, and the Pont au Change, with a barge below its arch; but one great building, the Palais de Justice, occupies the greater part of the picture. Two sides of it are seen, and many towers, and Méryon has drawn with a care peculiarly delicate the long six-light window to the left, with its innumerable little panes, of which the monotony is subtly broken.

First State. With "C. M." in the right upper corner, and no other letters.

The best impressions are always in this state.

Second State. With the title "La Tour de l'Horloge," written, and "Publié par L'Artiste" in the left corner, and "Imp. A. Delatre, R. St. Jacques, 171," in the right.

Third State. With the title printed in capitals: the rest still written, but beams of light now strike across the river front of the Palais de Justice.

Fourth State. The inscription identifying the print with the publication *L'Artiste* has now disappeared. The monogram of Méryon replaces the "C. M.," and the number "5" is added. The printer's address is in the smallest capitals below the title. There are further changes in the plate, such as the disappearance of a little round tower which until now has been in the background.

The late changes in the plate were unsuccessful experiments, and especially the beams of light which long after the work was finished, Méryon, in

the mental activity of nervousness, deemed to be necessary for the river-front of the building, "hitherto devoid of interest." By the change he did but produce a sensational effect, spoiling the dignity of the picture and its grave quietude.

13. TOURELLE, RUE DE LA TIXÉRANDERIE. H. $9\frac{8}{10}$; w. $5\frac{1}{10}$. A turret at the street corner, with neighbouring houses, Gothic and modern, and a by-way in deep shadow. Two men point to the turret from the street; a horseman rides by, and a woman stands in an open doorway. About the house with the turret there is the free foliage of the vine.

First State. With "C. M." in the right upper corner.

Weak impressions, even in this state, are not rare, but only the rich have value.

Second State. With the addition of the title, "Tourelle rue de la Tixéranderie, demolie en 1851," and "A. Delatre, imp. R. St. Jacques 265," and the number "6."

14. ST. ETIENNE-DU-MONT. H. $9\frac{8}{10}$; w. $5\frac{2}{10}$. The west front of the church faces us in the background, and before it on the left, mostly in deep shadow, is the old Gothic Collège de Montaigu, and to the right the angle of the Pantheon, with workmen engaged on its masonry.

Dark figures pass small in the narrow street between the tall lines of the buildings.

The Rev. J. J. Heywood has a trial proof, pure etching, probably unique, in which the plate is about an inch and a half broader and longer than the measured plate. There is also a trial proof before "C. M." in the upper corner, but with the plate already reduced.

First State. With "C. M." in the right upper corner. The arms of the workman on the lowest planks of the scaffolding are raised high and near together.

Further work has now, in the best impression, given softness to what was brilliant already.

Second State. The arms and head of the workman on the lowest planks of the scaffold are blurred and nearly obliterated.

Third State. The arms, though partially upheld, are now wide apart, and well away from the head and face.

Fourth State. On the topmost stones of the Pantheon—the building to the right—there is printed, "St. Etienne du Mont et l'ancienne Bibliothèque Ste. Geneviève," and these topmost stones are shaded with diagonal lines instead of perpendicular.

Fifth State. At the top of the Pantheon there is now printed, "St. Etienne du Mont et l'ancien Collège de Montaigu." On one of the posters on the College wall there may be read: "A. Delatre,

imprimeur: taille douce: eau forte, Rue St. Jacques, 265." The plate now bears the number "7."

The plate has been coarsely copied—larger than the measurements given—with no "C. M." in the corner, and with "Delatre, C^ie^ du Maine" on a poster.

15. La Pompe Notre Dame. H. $6\frac{8}{10}$; w. 10. The engine-house, with tower, supported on innumerable woodwork, at the foot of which the water flows and little river-boats pass. In middle distance, the houses of the quay, and behind them the towers of Notre Dame.

There are rare but ineffectively printed trial proofs before any letters, and also with letters written differently from the inscription of the first state.

First State. With "C. Méryon, f^t^ Imp. R. N^e^ St. Etienne du Mont, 26" in the left corner, and "1852" in the right.

Second State. With "Publié par l'Artiste" written under the left corner. A written title is added, "La Pompe Notre Dame," and "Imp: A. Delatre R. St. Jacques, 176" under the "1852."

Third State. "C. Méryon D. S." added in upper right corner, and the title is now printed in capitals, with the "1852" under it: Delatre's address alone occupying the corner. All reference to *l'Artiste* removed.

Fourth State. "C. M." instead of the "C. Méryon, D S."

Mr. Heywood has a drawing which shows that the view was first meant to have been taken or seen from under an arch in the foreground.

16. LA PETITE POMPE. H. $4\frac{2}{10}$; w. $3\frac{2}{10}$. A little design as of graceful cordage—idealized water-pipes—springing from the here dainty Pompe in miniature at bottom, and surrounding lines of verse which tell the building fated to destruction, that "il faut mourir."

Trial proofs have no signature nor address, nor any shading between the pipes that enclose the "P." and "N. D."

The only issued state has Méryon's name and address, and is very rare.

17. LE PONT NEUF. H. $7\frac{3}{10}$; w. $7\frac{2}{10}$. The three last arches of the Pont Neuf: the piers of the Bridge still topped with turret-like buildings used as shops. There is a dark arch and timber-work at right angles with the Bridge; houses to the left; and to the right the chimney of the Mint.

Trial proof before burin work. Thin.

First State. With the lines of verse :—

"Ci-gît du vieux Pont Neuf
L'exacte resemblance," &c.

and with "C. Méryon del. sculp. 1853" in the left corner, and "Imp. A. Delatre, rue de la Boucherie N° 6."

Second State. The lines of verse alone removed. In this state are most of the finest impressions; and some thin ones.

Third State. The inscriptions in the corners are now removed and the title is introduced in light tall capitals, "Le Pont Neuf." The tall chimney of the Mint has disappeared, and the houses on the further side of the street beyond the Bridge are greatly lowered.

Fourth State. The title is now in very small capitals, followed by the date "1850," and "A. Delatre Imp. R. St. Jacques, 265," and the initials "C. M." are in an upper corner and the figure "9" in the left corner.

18. LE PONT AU CHANGE. H. $6\frac{2}{10}$; w. $13\frac{3}{10}$. The long Bridge crosses the picture from the left, to the Palais de Justice on the right. Near it is moored a little wooden bath-house or *lavoir*, and behind it rises small in the distance the tower of the Pompe. The broad water of the foreground is alive with ripple and the movements of boats and men.

There are rare trial proofs in various stages of completion. Mr. Heywood has one without any distance or

sky. There are others, thin, before much added work, which gives colour to the plate.

First State. With "C. Méryon del. sculp. MDCCCLIIII" in left corner, and "Imp. R. Neuve St. Etienne du Mont" in the right.

Second State. The balloon *Speranza* has disappeared, and there is a crescent moon and many birds of prey. The title is given, "Le Pont au Change," and there is a monogram in the left upper corner.

Third State. With the objects in the sky again altered: there are several small balloons, and the plate bears the number "10."

Fourth State. With "Vasco de Gama" on a balloon, and other names on others.

These later states are not common, but their impressions are never very fine.

19. L'ESPÉRANCE. H. $2\frac{4}{10}$; w. 5. Lines of verse written to accompany the *Pont au Change*. They begin "Léger aérostat, o divine espérance."

20. LA MORGUE. H. $9\frac{2}{10}$; w. $8\frac{2}{10}$. The old Morgue of Méryon's day, as seen from the quay-side. Wash-houses low in the foreground. Behind and above the Morgue, a background of tall houses. In the front a body borne to the dead house: the scene witnessed by alarmed women and a curious crowd.

There appear to be one or two trial proofs, unfinished.

First State. Before any letters. Very rare.

Second State. With "C. Méryon, del. sculp. MDCCCLIV" in the left corner and "Imp. Rue Neuve St. Etienne du Mont N° 26" in the right.

Early impressions—rich and brilliant—of this state are equal to the first, and are rare.

Third State. The previous letters removed, and the title added, "La Morgue : 1850," and "Sabra, dentiste du peuple" added on a house over the Morgue itself, and "Hôtel des Trois Balances Meublé" on another house, and the monogram in the left upper corner.

Fourth State. To the same title is added "A. Delatre, imp. R. St. Jacques, 265," and the number "11."

Fifth State. "Imagerie religieuse : exportation" is on another house.

Of the *Morgue* and of the *Abside* Mr. Haden excellently writes, "From both these it may be inferred that his work was not impulsive and spontaneous, like etchers' work in general; but reflective and constructive, slow and laborious. . . . His method was this—he made not a sketch, but a number of sketches, two or three inches square, of parts of his picture, which he then put together and arranged into an harmonious whole, which whole he first bit in and then worked into completeness with the dry point. What is singular, and a proof of his concentrativeness, is that the result has none of the arti-

ficial character usual to this kind of treatment, but that it is always broad and simple, and that the poetical motive is never lost sight of."

21. L'HOTELLERIE DE LA MORT. H. $4\frac{8}{10}$; w. $1\frac{4}{10}$. On two separate plates, printed generally on the same paper, but in two colours, is a set of melancholy verses to accompany the *Morgue*. They invite passers-by to enter, declaring that here the town of Paris, to its poor children, "en mère charitable,"

> "Donne en tout temps gratis
> Et le lit et la table."

22. L'ABSIDE DE NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS. H. $6\frac{5}{10}$; w. $11\frac{8}{10}$. The Church of Notre Dame and its neighbourhood seen from behind; the apse being nearest us. Waste ground in the foreground, with a waggon and horses. Boats by the water's edge. And the Church seen over the river. To the left, over the houses of the town, a flight of birds in the great rolling sky.

One or two curious trial proofs. Mr. Heywood's—probably the earliest existing—shows nearly half the plate blank.

First State. Before any letters, but the sky, which was wrought last, just finished.

Of extreme rarity.

Second State. With "C. Méryon, del. sculp.

MD.CCCLIV" in the left corner, and "Imp. Rue Neuve St. Etienne du Mont, 26" in the right.

Brilliant and rich impressions of this state, on thinnish wiry paper—old Dutch—represent the plate admirably. The thick paper impressions are inferior.

Third State. With the date alone removed in preparation for the altered one of the next state. And a harder definiteness (through fresh work) in all the little roofs and chimneys of the background to the right.

Fourth State. The remainder of the previous inscriptions removed, and the title inserted, "L'Abside de Notre Dame de Paris, 1853," and "A. Delatre, Imp. R. St. Jacques, 265."

Fifth State. With the addition of "C. Méryon, del. sculp." within left upper corner, and of the number "12." These two last states retain little tone and atmosphere.

This is accounted the masterpiece of Méryon, by right of its solemn and austere beauty. On two very early impressions — one belonging to Mr. Richard Fisher—there are written in Méryon's hand, verses (slightly varied) to accompany the *Abside.* The following is the amended version: the best of the two which Mr. Fisher sends me:—

"O toi dégustateur de tout morceau gothique
Vois ici de Paris la noble basilique.
Nos Rois, grands et dévôts, ont voulu la bâtir
Pour témoigner au Maître un profond repentir.
Quoique bien grand, hélas! on la dit trop petite
De nos moindres pécheurs pour contenir l'élite."

23. Le Tombeau de Molière. H. $2\frac{7}{10}$; w. $2\frac{3}{10}$. A fancy composition; a crown of laurels surrounding the tomb of Molière.

The published state has Méryon's name and date and address. (See No. 3.)

24. Tourelle, dite de Marat. H. $8\frac{4}{10}$; w. $5\frac{3}{10}$. The corner turret of the Rue de l'École de Médecine—the house in which Marat was assassinated. The house opposite is seen, and the junction of the streets. In the sky, in proofs and the first state, there is a symbolical representation of Truth, Justice, and oppressed Innocence.

There is distributed among different collections a small succession of trial proofs, with "May" and "June" in pencil in the margin, before the sky around the symbolical figures, or, later, with the sky around the symbolical figures, but before the words "Fiat Lux" in the open book, or, latest, with "Fiat Lux." They are generally on fine India paper.

First State. With the title "Tourelle, dite de Marat," and the legend, "Sainte inviolable Vérité: divin flambeau de l'âme, quand le chaos est sur la terre tu descends des cieux pour éclairer les hommes et régler les décrets de la stricte justice," and "Imp. Pierron, R. Montfaucon, Paris."

Second State. For the legend and previous title is substituted "Tourelle, Rue de l'École de Médecine, 22 Paris," and the symbolical figures have gone.

In Mr. Haden's impression Méryon has drawn in pencil the head of Charlotte Corday where the figures were.

Third State. Slight rays now cross the sky. Where the figures were there are two small dark birds, and to the last title is added "M.D.CCCLXI."

Fourth State. There is added "*Gazette des Beaux Arts.*" *Tirage* of the *Gazette.*

It must not be thought that because Méryon was more than once insane, the symbolical figures in the trial proofs and in the first state could not be the work of reason or sanity. Doubtless the printer looked at them disapprovingly, and so got Méryon to remove them. To him they were no part of the "view" presented daily to his eyes, and he had not to consider the place of fine imagination in Art.

25. RUE DES CHANTRES. H. $11\frac{8}{10}$; w. $5\frac{9}{10}$. Tall houses rise on each side of the very narrow and shadowed street. Weird figures throng the foreground. At the street's end, a white house and the spire of the Sainte Chapelle.

The Museum has a trial proof before the bells and the sky.

First State. Before the title. Rare.

Second State. With the title, "Rue des Chantres, Paris, MDCCCLXII" and "Chez Rochoux, Quai

de l'Horloge. Pierron, Imp. 2 ; Montfaucon 1." Early impressions are as good as in the first state.

26. MINISTÈRE DE LA MARINE. H. $6\frac{6}{10}$; w. $5\frac{8}{10}$. The building indicated on the title is seen from the side. Wild creatures in the sky.

First State. Before either monogram or title. Very rare.

Second State. With monogram only. Rare.

Third State. With monogram and title.

Fourth State. With "Fictions et Vœux" added to title, and the address of Cadart and Luquet. The *tirage* of the French Etching Club.

27. BAIN FROID CHEVRIER. H. 5 ; w. $6\frac{8}{10}$. Chevrier's Bath-house to the right of the Bridge.

Trial proofs before the sky, and with the sky, but before the letters on the advertising board over the Bath-house, are in the British Museum and in Mr. Haden's collection and elsewhere.

First State. With "Bain Froid Chevrier" on the board above Bath-house. Before title. Rare.

Second State. With title, "Bain Froid Chevrier, dit de l'École. Paris, MDCCCLXIV," and "Pierron Imp. Paris," and the monogram at top.

Some impressions are printed together with those

of a separate plate—a tablet of verses in which Méryon declares the law of equality :—

"Qui lie le serviteur au Maître
Et le sujet au Roi
C'est qu'il faut en tout temps sagement nous soumettre
Au dur, au rigoureux, au suprême bain froid."

28. LE PONT-AU-CHANGE VERS 1784. H. $5\frac{3}{10}$; W. $9\frac{4}{10}$. The long and dark quay wall to the right carries the eye to a line of irregular houses on a distant bridge, beyond a space of the river. A wooden mill on a broad boat moored on the water. To the left a distant quay, in sunlight; houses on it, and over their tall roofs is seen the Tower of St. Jacques-de-la-Boucherie.

Very rare and brilliant proofs before the great dark rope was added across the picture.

First State. With the great dark rope, but before letters. Rare.

Second State. With "C. Méryon, Sculp. mdcccl. d'après un dessin de Nicolle tiré du cabinet de M. Destailleur, architecte. Imp. A. Delâtre, faub. St. Jacques, No. 81," and the title.

Nearly all impressions are in rich brown ink.

The great thick rope of the two published states is out of keeping with the delicate previous work, which in the early proofs is so fine and subtle.

29. Le Pont Neuf et la Samaritaine de dessous la première arche du Pont-au-Change. H. $5\frac{7}{10}$; w. 8. High in the foreground the arch of the Pont-au-Change filling the upper part of the picture. Through it is seen the sunny quay to the right, and in front the Samaritaine, with its belfry, and the Pont Neuf with sunshine striking across its turrets.

Very rare and brilliant proofs before any letters, and before some work round the head of the man fishing in the foreground.

The published state has "C. Méryon sculp. d'après un dessin de Nicolle, tiré du cabinet de Monsieur Destailleur, architecte. Imp. A. Delatre, Rue faub. St. Jacques 81," and the title.

Like No. 28, generally printed in rich brown ink, and after the earliest impressions apt to be heavy.

30. Rue Pirouette. H. 5; w. $4\frac{5}{10}$. A place where streets meet, and tall houses, old and new, cluster together. Shops to the left. Many figures, of gossips pausing and busy people pursuing affairs.

First State. Before "C. M. et L" jotted on the chimney by the chief gabled house, and before any title. Rare.

Second State. With "C. M. et L" on the chimney, and with the title "Rue Pirouette, 1860."

Third State. With the addition of "Méryon sculp.," in left corner, and "Laurence del" in

right, and also to the right "Delatre, Imp., R. S. J. 265."

Fourth State. The title has now become "Rue Pirouette aux Halles, 1860;" "Delatre," etc., moved under it, and the positions of Laurence and Méryon are reversed. "C. M. et L" has gone from the chimney.

Fifth State. The top *affiches* on the house-wall entirely changed to "Aux noces de Gamache—Sacoche," etc.

31. PARTIE DE LA CITÉ DE PARIS, VERS LA FIN DU XVII^me^ SIÈCLE. H. 6; w. 12 7/10. Behind a thin line of water in the immediate foreground there stretches a long row of timbered houses of the Middle Age, with many details of their architecture delicately traced. Other gabled houses to the left, and an arch in deep shadow.

Trial proofs before the sky and before the towers and before much strengthening of the work.

First State. On the advertising board aloft to the right, the inscription "Au Cana, C. Méryon, Restaura., Paris, An de Gra. MDCCCLXI."

Second State. "Au Cana" alone is removed.

Third State. The rest of the previous inscription on the board is removed, and we read instead of it, "Au Repu. Le Sobre resta. Poissons fr." The

title is added, and a legend beginning with the statement that in all probability the south front of the present houses inhabited by Tanners formed a side of the Rue de la Pelleterie. There is also the name and address of Rochoux, a printseller, and of Delatre.

32. Entrée du Convent des Capucins Français à Athènes. H. $7\frac{6}{10}$; w. 5. The preserved ruin—the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates—with an effect of sunlight, chiefly Méryon's own, is to the right of the picture. The gate is to the left.

First State. Before any letters. Rare.

Second State. With the title, Méryon's name and the printer's.

A free rendering of a drawing or engraving. It was done for Count Léon de Laborde's *Athens in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries.*

33. A Doorway. H. $6\frac{6}{10}$; w. $4\frac{4}{10}$. A light sketch of a door, and of the carvings round it. It is doubtless, like the two next numbers, a *souvenir* of Bourges. Rare.

34. Ancienne Habitation à Bourges. H. $9\frac{6}{10}$; w. $5\frac{5}{10}$. A line of houses, chiefly wooden and overhanging, recedes into the background to the right.

Trial proofs on larger plate before "C. M.," and with the very slightest indication of the furthest houses.

First State. With "C. M." within left corner.

Second State. With the title added.

35. La Rue des Toiles, à Bourges. H. $8\frac{5}{10}$; w. $4\frac{7}{10}$. Looking down a street that goes to the left. To the right, amongst the others, one white house, with the line of the gable straight and sharp.

Trial proof with date on chimney, "1853," and a dog in the left foreground. Later trial proof with the addition of inscription "C. Méryon, del sculp. 1853," and "Imp. N^e St. Etienne du Mont 26."

First State. With the date now removed from chimney.

Second State. With the dog removed.

Third State. The figures of a man and woman now added in the left foreground, and the inscriptions removed. The best state generally.

Fourth State. With title, "La Rue des Toiles, à Bourges."

Fifth State. With Delatre's address added. In this worn state the plate passed to the *Fine Arts Quarterly Review.*

It has been coarsely copied. A simple sign by which the copy may be known is that it has the bird against the gabled storey broad and white.

36. LE PILOTE DE TONGA. H. 8 ; w. $5\frac{7}{10}$. Within a little border is engraved a record in poetical prose of the achievements of the pilot who came on board near Tonga, and led the vessel safely to broad waters.

First State. With the inscription "Souvenir de Voyage, MDCCCXLII-VI."

Second State. With Delatre's address added.

37. LE MALINGRE CRYPTOGAME. H. $2\frac{8}{10}$; w. $2\frac{3}{10}$. A monster of the mushroom tribe.

First State. Before title.

Second State. With title.

38. A DOG'S HEAD. H. $2\frac{2}{10}$; w. $2\frac{9}{10}$. Lightly sketched.

39. GRENIERS INDIGÈNES ET HABITATIONS À AKAROA. H. $5\frac{6}{10}$; w. $9\frac{6}{10}$. Natives receiving a European.

First State. Before title.

Second State. With title.

40. GRANDE CASE INDIGÈNE. H. $5\frac{5}{10}$; w. $9\frac{7}{10}$. Natives before a Cottage. A woman and child approach the group.

First State. Before title.

Second State. With title.

41. OCÉANIE : PÊCHE AUX PALMES. H. $6\frac{3}{10}$; w. $13\frac{4}{10}$. Naked natives employed as the title describes, and up to their waists in the water. In the distance, the steady frigate on a wide sea.

First State. Before title.

Second State. With title.

The only picturesque record of what Méryon saw in foreign parts ; and even this very faulty. But it has some of the sentiment of the Pilot of Tonga—the sailor's joy in free waters and the great air.

42. NOUVELLE ZÉLANDE : PÊCHE À LA SEINE. H. $6\frac{1}{10}$; w. 13. The scene is in a bay : around it sterile hills.

First State. Before title.

Second State. With title.

43. NOUVELLE ZÉLANDE : ÉTAT DE LA PETITE COLONIE FRANÇAISE D'AKAROA. H. $4\frac{3}{10}$; w. $6\frac{1}{10}$. Cottages by the water.

44. La Chaumière du Colon. H. $3\frac{2}{10}$; w. 3. A gabled cottage.

First State. Before title.

Second State. With title.

45 Prô-volant des Iles Mulgrave. H. $5\frac{7}{10}$; w. $3\frac{2}{10}$. On one impression of this poor thing Méryon wrote that there were printed the unusual number of 150 copies.

46. Cover for the New Zealand Set. H. $6\frac{1}{10}$; w. $9\frac{5}{10}$. "Voyage à la Nouvelle Zélande," &c.

47. Rochoux's Address Card. H. $3\frac{7}{10}$; w. $4\frac{7}{10}$. Two figures, symbolizing the rivers of Paris—the Seine and the Marne—are reclining at the top of the design, which encloses the address of one of the few printsellers who cared for Méryon's work in Méryon's life.

First State. With a lamp under the arch at bottom. Rare.

Second State. With a boat under the arch.

48. Verses to M. Eugène Bléry. H. 5; w. $2\frac{7}{10}$. Méryon addresses to his master Bléry, doubtless with an offering of prints, these lines of his "Muse adolescente."

49. Loi Lunaire. H. $6\frac{2}{10}$; $9\frac{6}{10}$. The law is framed in a representation of strange boxes in which it seemed fitting to Méryon, when he was mad, that mankind should sleep upright.

50. Loi Lunaire. H. $4\frac{8}{10}$; w. $3\frac{6}{10}$. A variation of the preceding plate.

51. Loi Solaire. H. $4\frac{7}{10}$; w. $3\frac{2}{10}$. A symbolical design, with the sun's rays, accompanies this law.

52 and 53. A Scheme to facilitate the forging of Bank Notes. Two pieces on a black ground, and on one of which is the word "France," and a woman's head.

54. Allegorical Design to serve as the frame for the portrait of a Printer. H. $6\frac{5}{10}$; w. 5. Round a blank space, in a late state filled up with a portrait, is the frame, ornamented with the "attributes" of printing. All sorts of proofs exist, and are worthless.

55. Rebus :—"La Vendetta." H. $3\frac{1}{10}$; w. 3. A woman kneels.

56. Rebus, of which the subject is De Morny. H. 6; w. $2\frac{7}{10}$.

57. Rebus :—Béranger. H. 12; w. $5\frac{9}{10}$. A big bird, a tavern-table, a fort, a key.

58. Collège Henri IV. ou Lycée Napoléon. H. $11\frac{7}{10}$; $19\frac{1}{10}$. A confusion of buildings fills the entire print.

First State. With a legend only at the side, saying that thirty impressions are now offered, though the plate is not finished.

Second State. With a steamer introduced on high, and note added, saying that there are only ten impressions.

Third State. With Pierron, the printer's address, and the wild upper part gone and replaced by houses.

Fourth State. With full title.

M. Vasset informs me that no effort could induce Méryon to remove the figures of the gymnasts. And indeed they are full of significant gesture.

59. Petit Prince Dito. H. $6\frac{6}{10}$; w. 5. The Prince riding; and a Ballad below.

60. VUE DE L'ANCIEN LOUVRE DU CÔTÉ DE LA SEINE. H. $6\frac{5}{10}$; w. $10\frac{5}{10}$. From a picture by Zeeman.

First State. Before title.

Second State. With title.

The commission Méryon received from the French Government two years before his death.

61. FRONTISPIECE FOR "L'ŒUVRE DE THOMAS DE LEU," PAR THOMAS ARNAULDET. H. 6; w. $4\frac{4}{10}$.

62. THE EWE. H. $3\frac{1}{10}$; w. $4\frac{1}{10}$. Copy from A. Van der Velde (*Bartsch* 14).

63. COW AND ASS. H. 3; w. $5\frac{3}{10}$. After De Loutherbourg.

64. THE SHEEP AND THE FLIES. After Karel du Jardin (*Bartsch* 38).

This and the next two are reversed copies, and are signed "C. M. après K. du J."

65. THE THREE SWINE IN FRONT OF THE STABLE. H. $6\frac{5}{10}$; w. $5\frac{5}{10}$. After Karel du Jardin (*Bartsch* 8).

66. THE TWO HORSES. H. $6\frac{4}{10}$; w. $5\frac{7}{10}$. After Karel du Jardin (*Bartsch* 4).

67. A SOLDIER STANDING, AND SEEN IN PROFILE. After Salvator Rosa (*Bartsch* 38). Mentioned in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, and not repudiated by Méryon. I have never seen it.

68. THE PAVILION OF MADEMOISELLE, AND A PART OF THE LOUVRE AT PARIS. H. $5\frac{3}{10}$; w. $9\frac{6}{10}$. After Zeeman (*Bartsch* 55). The first of a little set done by Méryon after four of Zeeman's eight *Views of Paris and its Neighbourhood*. The set was published about 1650 at Amsterdam by Clément de Jonghe.

69. THE ENTRANCE TO THE FAUBOURG ST. MARCEAU. H. $5\frac{3}{10}$; w. $9\frac{6}{10}$. After Zeeman (*Bartsch* 60).

70. A WATER MILL BY ST. DENIS. H. $5\frac{3}{10}$; w. $9\frac{6}{10}$. After Zeeman (*Bartsch* 57).

71. THE RIVER SEINE AND THE CORNER OF THE "MAIL" AT PARIS. H. $5\frac{3}{10}$; w. $9\frac{6}{10}$. After Zeeman (*Bartsch* 61).

72. THE SHIP OF JEAN DE VYL, OF ROTTERDAM. H. $2\frac{7}{10}$; w. $4\frac{7}{10}$. After Zeeman (*Bartsch* 7).

One of a little set done by Méryon after four of Zeeman's twelve etchings known as *Recueils de plusieurs Navires et Paysages*, and published in Paris by J. van Merlen, at the sign of the "City of Antwerp."

73. HAARLEM TO AMSTERDAM. H. $2\frac{7}{10}$; w. $4\frac{7}{10}$. After Zeeman (*Bartsch* 8).

74. FROM CALAIS TO FLUSHING. H. $2\frac{7}{10}$; w. $4\frac{7}{10}$. After Zeeman (*Bartsch* 14).

75. SOUTH SEA FISHERS. H. $2\frac{7}{10}$; w. $4\frac{7}{10}$. After Zeeman (*Bartsch* 18).

These and those after Karel du Jardin were done early, and the technical skill of Zeeman and Karel du Jardin laid the foundation for the greater art of Méryon.

76. THE SALLE DES PAS PERDUS. H. $10\frac{7}{10}$; w. $17\frac{2}{10}$. After Androuet Ducerceau. It represents a vaulted hall, with statues and a moving crowd. The original piece, of extreme rarity, was heartily admired by Méryon, who copied it at a time (1855) when he had proved sufficiently his power to create. He became contentedly subordinate, calling attention in an inscription not only

to the "main de maître" shown in Ducerceau's treatment of architecture, but to the truth of gesture and fine correctness of form.

First State. Before the address of Delatre, and with the inscription.

Second State. Without the inscription, and with the address of Delatre. The measured plate.

77. CHENONCEAU. H. $7\frac{1}{2}$; w. $4\frac{7}{10}$. After the plate by Androuet Ducerceau.

78. A HEAD OF CHRIST. After Philippe de Champagne. M. Burty, writing in Méryon's lifetime, chronicled this print as an early one. I have never had access to it.

79. A PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF SINOPE. H. $7\frac{2}{10}$; w. $10\frac{4}{10}$. The impressions, generally coloured, were published by Tanera.

80. SAN FRANCISCO. H. $9\frac{1}{2}$; w. 39. The great city, seemingly barren of noble buildings, lies out across the print. A foreground of unoccupied land. The laborious plate was done for a firm of bankers whose initials figure upon it. Méryon was furnished with various materials.

81. WOMAN SKETCHING A RUIN. H. $6\frac{2}{10}$; w. $8\frac{1}{10}$. From a drawing by M. Viollet-le-Duc. The ruined Castle is probably Pierrefonds.

82. LOUIS XI. RECEIVING A PRINTER. H. $6\frac{8}{10}$; w. 8. After a French miniature of the epoch in the Niel Collection.

83. CHEVET DE ST. MARTIN-SUR-RENELLE. H. $7\frac{2}{10}$; w. $4\frac{9}{10}$. After Polyclès Langlois. Done as an illustration to the *Mémoires de la Société de Antiquaires de Normandie.*

There are trial proofs before the title.

84. PASSERELLE DU PONT AU CHANGE APRÈS L'INCENDIE DE 1621. H. $\frac{7}{10}$; w. 9. From an old drawing in the possession of M. Bonnardot. The collector's stamp is imitated in the etching.

First State. Before all letters.

Second State. With the title.

85. LE GRAND CHÂTELET À PARIS. H. $9\frac{2}{10}$; w. $11\frac{8}{10}$. After a drawing made in 1780. The arched gate of the Châtelet is in the background. In the front a crowd as at a street market. The subject composes badly, and is treated unintelligently.

First State. Before any letters.

Second State. With all letters.

86. PORTRAIT OF M. CASIMIR LECOMTE. H. $13\frac{3}{10}$; w. $10\frac{3}{10}$. A seated figure, bald. Méryon is believed to have been furnished with a drawing. It is very common.

87. Evariste Boulay-Paty. H. $4\frac{2}{10}$; w. $4\frac{2}{10}$. From a bronze by David d'Angers.

88. François Viète. H. $7\frac{4}{10}$; w. $4\frac{3}{10}$. From a contemporary engraving, and used like the next five, as an illustration to a publication of Messieurs Benjamin Fillon and Octave de Rochebrune : *Poitou et Vendée.*

89. Pierre Nivelle, évêque de Luçon. H. $6\frac{3}{10}$; w. $4\frac{2}{10}$. From an old print.

90. T. Agrippa d'Aubigné. H. $4\frac{9}{10}$; w. 4. From a lithograph.

91. Jean Besly. H. $5\frac{8}{10}$; w. $4\frac{8}{10}$. After J. Isaac.

92. Réné de Burdigale, Sr. de Laudonnière Sablais. H. $6\frac{1}{10}$; w. $4\frac{3}{10}$. After Crispin de Pas.

93. Jacques Louis Marie Bizeul. H. $6\frac{6}{10}$; w. $4\frac{7}{10}$.

94. Benjamin Fillon. H. 5; w. $4\frac{3}{10}$. An antiquary of repute.

With this list of comparatively worthless portraits

ends the minor work of Méryon, thus far recognized by collectors. Certain other insignificant plates may exist, but the plates for which Méryon is famous and interesting have long been definitely known, and those that are of serious value and of high and individual quality are in the first division of the Catalogue.

THERE are three portraits of Méryon.

a. Bracquemond's etched portrait of the head seen in profile in a medallion. The first state has, in a corner, "B. à C. M." The second state has the plate reduced, and Méryon has written and signed with his name the lines—

"Messire Bracquemond
A peint en cette image
Le sombre Méryon
Au grotesque visage."

In the third state the verses are removed.

b. Bracquemond's etched portrait of Méryon seated.

c. Flameng's portrait—a lithograph—of Méryon sitting up restlessly in bed. The first state is before, and the second with, the title.

THE END.

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